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INVINCIBLE AMERICA

A Plan of Constructive Defence

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FOREWORD

Some there are who would abandon our army and navy entirely and who advocate peace at any price.

Others would arm our country to the teeth with a great standing army of hundreds of thousands costing hundreds of millions yearly.

This booklet outlines a practical plan for a great industrial army of trained men always available which will afford the largest possible protection without the usual waste of men and money. Every thinking American should read it. It has received the endorsement of many prominent army men and engineers.

How America can have a large army of trained men without waste of men and money.

There are two sides to the army question. Peace advocates ask why we should maintain a hundred thousand men in practical idleness, waste their time on useless effort, waste the money spent on their equipment and maintenance and develop a large class of men who have few ideals except to kill the enemies of their country.

The advocates of a large army ask: how can we be prepared to defend our great country with its thousands of miles of coast line, our cities and our homes without keeping up a large army and a proper reserve who are trained to fight? How can we, they ask, ignore the fact that great nations call treaties "only scraps of paper"? How can we defend the Monroe Doctrine? How can we maintain our National dignity when great disputes arise? How can we defend ourselves from a foreign foe who may land on our shores with a great army when we have barely fifty thousand men to-day who could take the field? That number is scarcely larger than a single army corps of the nations now engaged in the death struggle in Europe. As for the protection offered us by the Atlantic Ocean, distances to-day are so short on water that two of the chief naval battles of the present war were fought twice as far away from Europe as the distance across the Atlantic.

All attempts to solve this problem have failed. Thousands of earnest and patriotic men in the state militia and in the regular army have labored faithfully against serious difficulties to build up dependable organizations, and in many cases they have succeeded. In the Civil War and in the Spanish-American War there were units which performed wonderful services. But there has been a tremendous change in the conditions of warfare since that time. To send a small army of militia who are unaccustomed to the hardships of war against the seasoned and well trained troops of other great nations would be nothing more than criminal slaughter. To send

the regular army is out of the question, as it contains at present only 86,000 men in all, most of whom are necessary to defend the insular possessions and to man the fortifications and army posts.

Now the regular army already costs \$100,000,000 per year, or \$1,160 per year per man, which is from two to four times the cost per man of the army of any other nation. The militia, too, is very expensive, though it is not completely trained nor equipped for active service. To increase the regular army and the militia to what is considered adequate size, and to place each in a proper condition for service, will cost this country at least \$400,000,000 per year, or more than any other country on earth. To remedy the existing defects and to meet the needs of the United States for an adequate army without wasting a dollar or a man is the object of the new system here offered.

The new system consists simply in developing on a large scale the method found so successful in building the great Panama Canal, namely, place the great reclamation projects, the great road building schemes, the great Mississippi River Improvement and other great and much needed public works under the control of the U. S. Army Engineers. Give these engineers an army of young men who can handle a pick and shovel, live in the open, drive mules, load wagons, operate motor trucks, and do such work and live such a life as that required of a soldier. That the army engineers built and completed successfully and economically the greatest engineering feat of modern times at Panama, after other agencies had failed, is sufficient proof that they are equal to this new task. At Panama it was necessary to hire foreign labor on account of the climate, but in this country the common soldier can do all of the work.

Soldiers will be enlisted with this end in view from the very start. They will constitute a vast industrial army under the control of the war department; there will be important work for every man from the officer down to the rawest recruit; and all the men being profitably employed, it will be possible to maintain an army of five hundred thousand or more with a mere fraction of the loss and waste that is common under our present system.

These men will be enlisted for a period of several years.

The pay and other conditions will be made attractive enough to get sufficient good men and no more. The work will be conducted under the regular discipline of the army. The men will live in portable houses or camps at the various places where the work is being done throughout the country. The outdoor work and life will tend to harden the men to the life of a soldier. Every day an hour or more will be devoted to drill and other military training. On Saturdays extensive manœuvres will be practiced. Here then, in a nutshell is the scheme which will train a million men in a few years at very little more expense than the cost of the great engineering works on which the men are employed.

That a limited amount of practical, but thorough training is very effective in time of war was proven by the experience of the Germans a century ago. In 1809 the Germans were crushed by Napoleon, who forced them to agree to limit their army thereafter to forty-two thousand men. Germany kept her word, but cleverly arranged her system so that the men only served for a short time and then gave place to others. Thousands upon thousands were put through the army quickly, and out again, till Germany soon had a vast array of trained men ready to help accomplish the down-fall of Napoleon in 1815.

The great public works herein contemplated are such as have been discussed and advocated for many years. We Americans have a tremendous country, yet there is not to-day a single highway extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific worthy of the name. The roads of the west and of the south are abominable. Even in the east where millions have been spent on roads in recent years, only the main thoroughfares are suitable for modern traffic. The annual losses due to bad roads in America run into millions and millions of dollars. The days of the motor truck and the automobile are here. Farmers, truckmen, and business men all over this country are crying out for better roads. So far there has been but feeble answer. To build these roads will cost thousands of millions. There is no agency so capable for this great task as the National Government. Road building by the various counties and states has resulted to-day in a heterogeneous system of roads of all kinds and in all conditions which are in most cases supervised by politicians who have little knowledge of road engineering and in consequence the work has been

turned over in many cases to selfish contractors whose business it is to get enormous profits and put into the roads as little as possible of material and labor. The idea of making a road that would be durable for years to come is of no interest to them. There are engineers in the U. S. Army who can build roads as fine as any of the world. They are not handicapped by political affiliations. They are not burdened with a selfish desire to squeeze out the profit of a fat contractor. They are governed by the iron clad rule of army discipline. The simple, practical, and economical solution of the highway problem is to turn it over to the U. S. Army.

The Mississippi and Ohio River Systems call for effective and immediate improvement. The direct annual loss from floods runs into millions, to say nothing of tremendous indirect losses to trade and transportation. This great work will cost at least five hundred million dollars. The present annual losses would more than pay the interest on the entire cost of the work. The territory involved covers many states. No state can or should undertake it. It is outside the field of private enterprise. The National Government, alone, has the necessary authority and the financial ability to handle it. Much of the work which has been done up to date has been done as a political sop to the various sections through which these rivers pass. The work should be taken out of politics and turned over to the U. S. Army Engineers. If they do as well as they did at the Panama, the whole nation will rejoice.

The great Reclamation Projects have proved the ability of the U. S. Government to carry on great works of this character. During ten years the area of irrigated land in this country was doubled, largely through these Government irrigation systems. Who knows what might be accomplished if the army were put into this field for twenty years? This work should be continued and enlarged by the industrial army.

There are other great works needing attention, though not quite so urgent. The Inland Coastwise Canal along the Atlantic Seaboard, the draining of the vast swamp areas, the improvement of the national forests, and the building of the new Government railway in Alaska, can all be done by the new army.

Not only can the National Government do this work efficiently, but by purchasing supplies in enormous quan-

tities, it can do the work more economically than the small contractors can in local districts.

What kind of an army will this system produce? It must necessarily produce the best army in the world. No army in history has been so effective as the army composed of citizen soldiers when they were properly trained and physically able to endure the hardships of war. Our new industrial army will be an efficient force, well trained, always mobilized, always ready. It will be made up of hearty young fellows, accustomed to hard life in the open. They can stand the rain and snow, the cold and heat. They will be accustomed to the use of pick and shovel, to earth works, to concrete construction, to motor trucks, automobile tractors, and other machinery. They will be used to discipline, to working in squads, both large and small units. They will develop individual initiative. They will be accustomed to being shifted about from place to place, to hard physical labor, to hard foot and leg work and to carrying necessary equipment. The officers will be men who can really command, who as foremen, superintendents, and managers of departments, have seen real field service. They will be officers who can take responsibility and who have been weighed in the balance and not found wanting.

This army will be put through military drill an hour or more every day except Sunday. On Saturday it will practice field manœuvres and once each year it will take part in large units in operations on a large scale. There will be an educational department, wherein the men can study certain fundamental things necessary to the ideal life of a soldier. This will include hygiene, first aid to the injured, geography, horsemanship, motor-truck driving, track laying, bridge work and military tactics.

A man who can successfully drive a motor truck in building a wagon road would make an ideal man to drive the same truck in time of war. The ability to get there promptly under adverse conditions, and to keep his truck moving properly, are the requirements in each case. The same may be said of handling teams, wagons, and supplies. A man who can dig ditches and drains for roads and culverts can dig trenches. Battles are not always fought on macadamized roads. They are more likely to be fought on rain-soaked fields, over ditches, hills and valleys, through ice and snow, across streams and through

difficulties in general more like those of the road builder than anything else. Battles are never fought on the dance floor of a regimental armory nor on the well-kept lawns of an army post. It is said the life of a horse or a motor truck in the present European War is often not more than a week, and that at the beginning of the war this was often due to carelessness in handling or to the inability of inexperienced men to make slight adjustments. How foolish it is, then, to put trucks in charge of any but men trained to handle them in actual service.

The men of our industrial army would travel about the country more or less, and would become familiar with the climate, topography, local customs, and other conditions of the different sections of the country, so that in time of invasion there would be officers and men in every regiment familiar with the physical difficulties to be met with and they would avoid such disasters as those of history, which were caused by ignorance of local conditions. Napoleon's disastrous retreat from Moscow and his defeat at Waterloo would not have happened to our industrial army.

The soldiers of this army will be paid better wages than the present regular army, and they will earn the money. Their food and other supplies will be suitable for men doing hard physical labor and living out-of-doors. Their houses will be portable structures quickly moved from place to place. No more army posts should be built like the present establishments, except to be used as places of storage for army supplies.

What would be the mental and moral development of these men? Better than at present. Men who are engage in a great enterprise will have a higher sense of self-esteem and a greater personal interest in their work than they have if they spend their time in the ordinary monotonous routine of army life. Unfortunately there has often been a prejudice against the soldier in uniform in time of peace. Congress even passed a law in 1911 forbidding discrimination against the uniformed soldier by theatres and other places of entertainment. When these men are engaged on great public works and paid reasonable wages they will be respected and esteemed as highly in time of peace as in time of war.

Under the old system men often find it difficult to get work after their discharge from the army because their whole life in the service has made them unadapted either by experience or disposition to work in civil life. Under the new system the men will gain practical knowledge of many useful trades. Regular habits of industry and the rigid discipline of their training will make them the best and most efficient workers for civil life. Employers are always seeking men who have such habits and training at good wages

A Great National Reserve will develop from this army. Men should serve in the regular army for the period of their enlistment and they may then re-enlist at advanced pay or be retired to the first reserve, which will meet yearly for the manœuvres. They will have their expenses paid during this meeting and will be paid for their time. The reserve is subject to call only in time of war. After serving for a period of years in the first reserve, they will then be retired to the second reserve, which is not called out unless the first reserve is inadequate.

This system need not be installed all at once. Like the rural free delivery it can be started on a small scale and increased gradually till it supersedes the present army.

The individual states may keep their present system of militia till the National Army is well established and work progressing on many projects. They will then either abandon the state militia entirely or copy the National Army for state use.

Some work will be done in every state, but only as part of a comprehensive plan wherever and whenever most needed and according to plans worked out under the efficient eyes of the Army Engineers; not in the extravagant fashion of the annual river and harbor appropriations. Thus will be found a solution of the old pork barrel system from which most of our congressmen will be glad to get away, if it can be done gracefully. Here is their chance.

A Balance Wheel to National Industry can be created out of this industrial army. The time is now here when something more effective than the present methods must be provided to cope with the problem of the unemployed during periods of business depression. The new army system offers a practical solution, for the same reason that

it solves the problems of great public improvements, namely, because only the National Government is large enough to handle the proposition.

A watch needs a balance wheel to make its movements regular. Likewise a clock needs a pendulum. A water-works needs a reservoir to conserve the supply over periods of plenty and scarcity. A farmer provides barns and feed to carry his stock over periods of non-production. A successful business house keeps on hand or in bank a reserve supply of cash to protect it during periods of reduced income. But a great nation with ninety millions of people has never taken the trouble to provide a practical method of absorbing its surplus labor during slack times, nor thought it worth while to care for the idle human beings who must be fed and sheltered no matter whether employed or not.

When the stock or bonds of a reputable corporation are offered too freely on the stock exchange or fall a few points in price, there is started a buying movement which "supports the market" and takes up the surplus stock. When the country produces more wheat than can be consumed at home, it is "absorbed" by Europe. When an American corporation produces more steel or harvesters, sewing machines, or watches than can be sold in the home market, they are "dumped abroad." But when a financial crisis arises which destroys the confidence of business men the country over, nearly everybody gets scared, people stop buying goods they can do without, trade falls off, employees are discharged by the hundreds and wages fall in many industries. There is then a surplus of labor.

Unfortunately there is no support to the labor market, it cannot be "absorbed" by Europe, it cannot be "dumped abroad." It cannot even be stored in warehouses like surplus cotton and corn. Surplus labor is a living, moving, breathing reality different from all other commodities. It is composed of human beings who must eat and sleep and be clothed, and though we have devised systems for disposing of every other kind of surplus, all efforts to take care of the surplus labor have proved fruitless.

As the new reserve banking system was devised to provide a balance wheel for the money market by providing an elastic currency during varying business conditions, so the industrial army can be made to balance the labor

market. This operation is very simple. Congress or the President or the War Department should have power during bad industrial periods of increasing the industrial army by new recruits in a special class, who are enlisted for only a short period, perhaps one year. The number of men taken in this way should be limited only by the extent of the business depression and the consequent labor surplus. It might rise as high as half a million men, but would probably never do so. These men should always receive the regular military training and should be put in the national reserve after their term of enlistment expires. They may be released from service in less than one year if the regular industries of the country demand them sooner.

Most of the unemployed are single men which makes them especially adapted to this system. Employers usually aim to keep their oldest, steadiest and best men even during dull times, and this includes men generally with families. Even married men will be better off to join the army temporarily, than to starve or accept charity. They will be fed, clothed, and housed in the army and all of their wages can be sent home to their families, whom they can visit often, as they will not be far from them.

Only a small number of men will probably be taken into the army during a depression. The mere fact that the army is ready to employ them is sufficient. When the Government puts its stamp on a paper dollar few people ever take it to the treasury to have it redeemed. The mere fact that the Government is ready to redeem it is sufficient. So with labor. When the Government stands ready to redeem or employ every man who applies, few will apply. Why? Simply because employers will know that the sale of their products will not decrease through bad business and, therefore, they will keep their employees themselves.

The wages of this special army would not be so high as to keep them out of the regular industries when the period of depression is passed. It would be a simple matter to employ them all, as the army engineers would always have projects under way scattered over the entire country on which many extra men could be used economically. In case of a mere local disturbance, the work can be provided only in that particular section. The money for this special operation would come from bond issues. During

industrial depressions much money is withdrawn by timid persons from the various channels of trade and either hoarded or put into postal savings banks or similar places. This money could be at such times invested in Government Bonds and through the expenditures on the special industrial army, it would at once flow back into the channels of business.

Here then is the balance wheel for labor. All the men who want work and cannot find it elsewhere, can find it in the army. If these men do not stop earning, they likewise will not stop consuming. Where there is no stoppage of consumption, there can be little stoppage of production. Therefore, the hesitating wheels of industry will revolve and confidence will be quickly restored. If there is unlimited demand for wheat, the price of wheat will not decline below a certain point. So if there is an unlimited demand ready to absorb the surplus labor, wages will not decline below a certain level, neither will business men become frightened by a financial crisis. They will know if all the men in the country are continually employed, that the consuming public is ever and always practically unchanged. They will know if the materials and supplies used in one industry are decreased, that there will be a corresponding increase in other lines, for the total number of workers in the whole country will not be allowed to decrease.

How much self-respect and manliness will be saved to the workers themselves cannot be measured in dollars and cents. The army may in this way absorb the men who might otherwise become part of the flotsam and jetsam of city and town out of a job and out of a home. It will keep them out of soup-houses and lodging-houses. It will keep them from becoming vagabonds or charity applicants. It will give them self-respecting work, and pay them decent wages for it, better wages, in fact, than are often paid in some industries. Their work will be efficient and effective under the discipline of trained officers and according to well-defined plans of the army engineers. There could be no better work found for men who have lost their grip, or lost their jobs than a year under the discipline of the industrial army.

Labor unions will receive practical help from this system, especially those comprising labor which is poorly paid and which is most affected by periods of depression

and by competition of cheap labor. The new system will tend to establish a minimum wage, though not in the way usually intended and with none of the possible ill effects of a minimum wage law. Employers will profit as well, for if there are no unemployed the purchasing power of the public will be unimpaired and there can be no long and serious depressions in business such as cripple and ruin many an employer at present.

Suppose it does cost a few hundred millions to operate this system, and thereby avert the consequence of a financial panic. The money will all go into legitimate public improvements which are worth all that they cost, national industries will be saved from a long period of stagnation, and there will be a great saving to charity, but the greatest benefit of all, which cannot be measured in money, will be the self-respect and habit of industry which will be saved or created for the thousands of men who would otherwise become recipients of charity.

To sum up the advantages of this new army system it will:

1. Provide an adequate standing army.
2. Provide a suitable trained reserve.
3. Improve the morale of the soldier.
4. Build up our great public works.
5. Fit the soldier for conditions of war.
6. Provide for surplus labor in hard times.
7. Relieve one of the causes of depression.
8. Retain the self-respect of the unemployed.
9. Give the American people value received for every dollar spent on the army.

This then is the new American Army. Their weapons are not weapons of death, but picks and shovels, hammers and drills, the tools of thrift and industry, the instruments of peace. They are conquerors, not of men, but of the great forces of nature. Soldiers not of battle, but soldiers of the great common good. How every American bosom will swell with pride at the sight of such an army. The pride of every American in the Panama Canal will be reflected and re-echoed in every great highway and river from coast to coast. And when the time comes, if it does come, to repel a foreign foe, these men will be fitted by their training and experience to fight for their country as well as any army that ever took the field.



NOTICE

If you favor this plan for an invincible army, pass it on to your friends. Write to your Congressman and Senator in Washington about it. Send it to every prominent public man whom you may know personally. Order a few copies and help in the patriotic work of distribution. 50 copies mailed post-paid for \$1.00; 1,000 copies by express pre-paid, \$15.00. This booklet is copyrighted, but publishers may print any part of it upon request.

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